

In Stanford

A N

A N S W E R ^{2.}

TO MANY SLANDEROUS

REPORTS

CAST ON THE

BAPTISTS,

A T

ASHFIELD.

WHEREIN IS SHEWN,

The first RISE and GROWTH of the BAPTIST
CHURCH there,

TOGETHER WITH

The SUFFERINGS they have passed through.

WRITTEN BY CHILEAB SMITH.

N O R W I C H: (Con^d.)

PRINTED by ROBERTSONS AND TRUMBULL,
FOR THE AUTHOR. M,DCC,LXXIV.

To the READER.

*V*ARIOUS are the dispensations of the providence of GOD, working according to his sovereign will in this our day; as also in former ages, from sacred record doth appear.

We read, that DAVID when he was about to go against the Philistine, was accused of pride and naughtiness, of heart, by his brother, who after his accusation asks him a question; but seeing he could judge his heart, DAVID leaves the question also for him to find out,

Much like this, is one instance, I am about to speak something of, in the following lines: In our enemies slandering us, it was not enough it seems for them to cant their slanders about amongst themselves by word of mouth, but they must write down a bundle of them and send to the General Court, wherein after many mean reflections, they declare that the spring of our actions are pride, vanity, prejudice, impurity, and uncharitableness: Thus they have proceeded to judgment, and since I had no liberty to speak for myself when I was bro't upon trial, therefore I have written the following account, that all my enemies, as well as friends, may know what the truth is; still praying GOD to grant repentance and remission of sins to all my accusers.

Ashefield, May 10, 1774.

C. SMITH.



A N S W E R

TO MANY SLANDEROUS

R E P O R T S

That are cast on the BAPTIST CHURCH, at *Ashfield*, and on CHILEAB SMITH in particular, which was the first Stone that was laid in that Building.

SOME of which slanders have been sent to the General Court at *Boston*, and there read in public; and soon after we had account from England, that they had reached there, with a desire that we would make a reply, which we did, and sent it to *England*.

In Which slanderous paper, we are set out to be such a people, that we are not worthy of the protection of civil government (or to that effect.) But it would be too tedious here to make answer to all the slanders (that we hear) distinctly: But in general we know of no slanderous report, but what we have proved, or know, to be false. For many of our enemies that are ignorant of what we are; and in great measure, of what we do, would cast out our names as evil; charging us with many evil things that we are entirely innocent of.

Therefore I shall take the following method to answer for myself and brethren (and if PAUL thought himself happy because he should answer for himself, why may not I?) viz.

1st. I shall give some account of myself from my youth, to the time of my leaving the church at *South-Hadley*.

2d. Of my conduct at *Hunts-Town*, now called *Ashfield*, and of the work of GOD there. And,

3d. Of our sufferings as a society.

4th. Of GOD's dealings with me in particular, with some exhortations to all, to take up the Cross and follow the lamb.

* * Whereby the reader may have the truth to judge upon in the room of slander.

But these things very briefly. And first. I was born at *Hadley*, of religious parents, my father died when I was about four or five years old ; and as I grew up, my mother instructed me in things of religion, and taught me how to live ; I promised to do better and endeavoured to reform, but soon found fault with my own conduct ; then I set up secret prayers in hopes that GOD would help me, but knew nothing of JESUS CHRIST, only by the hearing of the ear : Yet I was afraid to do that which I knew to be sin ; and then pray to GOD to keep me from sin and to pardon me. So I got along very uneasy with my own standing till I was about 17 years old ; then I was pricked to the heart indeed, by the words of a dying young man : The words were these, *for ever, for ever, what, not one drop of water ? For ever, for ever.* These words, being often repeated by him, alarmed me to the purpose ; and there was wrought in me a resolution to strive to enter in at the strait gate : But I had so much light, that I knew I could not strive and allow myself in any known sin.

Before this, I used to be frequently with vain company, but now I forsook them, and betook myself to some solitary place, with my bible, to read and pray. This and much more I did, but no help could I find. O the doleful nights that were appointed me before I saw any light ! But after long striving in this form, I began to see something in the bible that I saw not before. First, I began to see something of the purity of the revealed will of GOD, concerning man, contained in the moral law ; and as the commandment came in the spirituality of it, my sin revived, and I saw myself more and more to be dead : And I well remember, that as the commandment came more into my understanding, my heart consented to it that it was good, till I longed more to get alone with my bible, than ever I did to get into vain company, hoping I should attain to that good I saw in the pure commands of GOD. But alas ! by and by I began to see the steadfastness of the command, and

by that light to see my own sinfulness. The law I saw, held out pure rules to practice by. But O the dreadful curses it shot forth against the breakers of it ! My mother told me that JESUS CHRIST came to save sinners, but I knew nothing of him, though I had heard of him many times. This case I was in for some time, till I saw myself, as it were, hang over the bottomless pit, by the thread of my life, which I saw was liable every moment to be cut asunder. So I lay for some time in this case ; and although my understanding was not fruitful then, yet I really experienced the truth of them words, JOHN vi. 44. *No man can come to me except the father which hath sent me draw him.* I felt the truth of it to my amazement ! But after a while I began to see something of JESUS CHRIST ; at which these words dropt into my mind, which PETER said to CHRIST ; *We know and are sure that thou art that CHRIST the son of the living GOD.* This seemed to be some reviving news from another place than where I had been seeking for help. There were many other places of scripture that came to my mind with such power, that the words of condemnation, which came on my soul by the law, began to give place, so that I began to feel some peace in comparison of what I felt before ; for, by and by, I found that CHRIST said unto PETER, *Blessed art thou Simon Bar-Jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my father which is in heaven,* Mat. xvi. 17. For I was convinced of the truth of the words of the gospel, as I was of the law ; and if PETER was blessed upon that confession, then why not I ? And I had a witness in my conscience, that flesh and blood did not reveal it unto me, for I had heard of him many times before, but had seen no form or comeliness in him, wherefore I should desire him. But now I had some views of his glory, and as I saw more and more of his divine excellencies, the more I loved him ; for by the scripture I saw that he was a friend to the law of GOD, and had magnified it, and made it honourable : And to be brief, every discovery I had of him, attracted my soul more in love to him ; and then, I believe, I did really hunger and

thirst after righteousness : Then these words were spoke to my soul, and brought light and life with them : *Ho ! Every one that thirsteth come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye buy and eat, yea, come buy wine and milk, without money and without price, Isaiah lv. 1.* This was good news to a hungry soul, which was really poor, as I was. The scripture was now opened to my understanding, more clearly to see the way of help for sinners, by CHRIST.

After this I got into darkness again, having not so clear views of the love of CHRIST as I had before, for which I went mourning for several days ; but after a while, as I was making my petition to GOD, in the name of CHRIST, in these words, LORD (said I) I have no where else to go but unto thee, thou only hast the words of eternal life. No sooner had I said these words, but as an echo, these words came into my soul, *and we know and art sure thou art CHRIST, the son of the living GOD* ; and immediately there was, as it were, a veil taken off from my understanding, and I was made to understand the scriptures ; and I saw the glory of CHRIST, as the glory of the only begotten of the father, full of grace and truth, and my heart's love went out to him, in these words, my LORD and my GOD. Then I believed I knew what CHRIST meant, John xiv, 12. *And I remembered what CHRIST did after he arose from the dead. Luke xxiv. 45. Then opened he their understanding that they should understand the scriptures.* But here I must omit giving a particular account how I was led to see the law of GOD by itself, and the gospel by itself, distinctly, and how the justice and mercy of GOD are perfectly agreed, in the salvation of the believer, and the strength of CHRIST to save such. *Who is this that cometh from Edom, travelling in the greatness of his strength, mighty to save, &c. Isaiah lxiii. 1.*

But to pass on, I now had a comfortable hope that I was delivered out of spiritual Egypt ; and the cry of my soul to the LORD was, what would you have me to do ? Yet I wanted teaching as much as *Israel* did when they went through the wilderness : So I went and joined myself

to the church, which I found afterwards was woefully fallen, or else never was in good standing; although the words of the covenant were good, yet I found afterwards that they did not pretend to practice according to it, which included true godliness.

So I got a church meeting, and found it publicly made manifest, that they did not pretend to require persons to be converted, in order to join the church, but to take them in when under the power of a carnal mind, which the scripture saith is enmity against God, and is not subject to his law; neither indeed can be.

These things, and many more of the like nature, I laid before the church; yet they stood where they were, so we parted for that time.

The minister told me he would have me go to the association with him, and carry my principles with me in writing: So I wrote my mind. First, concerning a true church of CHRIST, as I understood the scriptures; it being (in some) a spiritual house, CHRIST being the foundation; the members compared to living stones, and all the promises of the gospel centering upon such; which I at large set forth to the association, with scripture proofs. And,

Secondly, Described their church, being a carnal building; its foundation, men's inventions, and not CHRIST; its members, not living stones; but dead in trespasses and sins: For, although they did not refuse to take in a converted person if he desired it; yet never the sooner for his being converted; so that if a person is never no better than was required to be a member of their church, he must perish eternally.

These things at large I laid before the association, and desired them, if they judged I was wrong, to shew me wherein, or deliver me their reasons in writing, at a convenient time; and promised, if they so did, I would conform to their opinion, or else give my reasons why I did not: But they refused giving any particular reasons, and only told me, in general, that I was wrong, and directed me to a certain minister to be convinced of my error. Yet I dont remember that they objected one word, but that I had described the two churches right;

but told me of difficulties in practising according to my principles (as one of the associated ministers told me afterwards, "that if a person was no better qualified, than was required to be a member of their churches, then they would all go to hell at last,") Then I went to the minister they directed me to, who, after he had perused my writings (being three sheets of paper written on both sides) his answer was, your reasons are unanswerable, signifying that the world of mankind could not take off my proofs.

So I came home, and withdrew from that church, in a public meeting. Some were for dealing with me for it, but finally they let me alone.

Now, if any should say how can this account be true? Since there has been a written account carried to the General Court at *Boston*, with three hands to it, wherein they say, "that *Chileab Smith* broke off from the church at *South-Hadley*, because of some small difficulty respecting church discipline, and he had not good nature enough to overlook it." I answer, that there is such a slanderous paper carried about I readily grant, for we have had news from *England* of it; with a desire that we should make answer to it; which we have done, but for the proof of what I have written, and that the aforesaid paper is a libel; I have now by me the writings that I carried to the association, and can prove it also by many living evidences: And more than this, suppose them slanders were true, yet the men that signed them, could not knowingly attest to them; for when they were acted, they were but children, if born, and the nearest of them were about thirty miles off. But to return, I was now withdrawn from the church, being settled in my own mind, that it was no church of CHRIST; and no body could I find that could take off my scripture proofs, so that I remained alone for some time, as to church fellowship,

Not long after this, I removed with my family to *Hunt's-Town* (now called *Ashfield*) where for sometime I could hear little or nothing of religion amongst my neighbours; but the cares of this vain world seemed to take up all their time.

Now I had in my family, a wife and eight children, my wife, I believed, was converted sometime before; but when I looked on my children, I had got no evidence that one of them were converted; yet my children were very dutiful to their parents: But Oh! tho't I, if the one thing needful be wanting, how dreadful will be the case. And as I used some times to take my little infants with me to my private retirements, to present them before GOD, and plead with CHRIST to bless them: So now they were a little advanced in years, my concern for them was exceeding great; yet I had great encouragement, especially at sometimes, that GOD would in his own time, hear and answer my cry for my poor children.

Again this thought came into my mind (which added to my distress) "What do you think to have all your children saved; you that are not worthy of the name of a christian, since there has been multitudes of holy men that have had wicked children. Oh! Now I had heart-acking work; for when I looked on my children, there was not one of them that I was willing should be lost. But after I had been in this case for some time, there was brought in my mind, the ability and willingness there is in CHRIST to save sinners, even all that will believe on him: And how also sometimes, whole households have been converted. These things were a great comfort to my mind; now I could go with freedom and pour out my soul before GOD, for all my children. I had also a great concern on my mind for my neighbours, and longed to have them see the certainty of the things of another world (and also mankind universal) so that their petitions, in the LORD's prayer, seemed to be the cry of my soul. *Our father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*

While I was thus exercised in my mind, this place of scripture came (with great power) into my mind: Luke xiii- 24, 25. *Strive to enter in at the strait gate,* &c. and opened to my view the dreadful state of those that should at last be shut out of the kingdom of hea-

ven, when their probation time should be over. So that I longed to warn my children and neighbours to press into the kingdom of heaven. Time looked like a point in comparison of eternity. And now the cross appeared, frightful in my view; for thought I, if I speak the things that I see, to my neighbours, they will scoff and deride me, which delayed my speaking for a while. But one day as I was walking solitary, that place of scripture came into mind, before cited, and many more scriptures, which shewed me the duty and obligation I was under to let the light that was lighted up in my soul shine before others, and not to hide it under a bed or bushel, which gained a resolution in my mind, to declare to others (if they would hear me) the truths that lay on my mind, and let come on me what will. So I left what I was about, and went among my neighbours, and desired them to come together (at such a time and place) for religious worship. So when the time was come, there came together almost all that were in the town, to hear: When, after praying, I took an opportunity to speak to them, what I saw from the forecited text, Luke xiii. 24, 25. Whereupon when I began to speak, I felt the power of GOD, in a marvellous manner, upon my own soul, which filled me with love, joy, and peace, with a real belief of the truth of what I saw. And now also, to my joy, the things that I had so long pleaded with GOD for; were, in some measure answered, viz. that GOD would pour out the awaking influence of his spirit on my children and neighbours, for an uncommon concern seized on their minds, and they were so pricked in their hearts, that, I have reason to believe, it never wore off, till the blood of JESUS CHRIST healed many of them (though some fell away) for, from that time forward, I plainly perceived an alteration among my children and some of my neighbours: Their discourse and behaviour was now altered, crying, what shall I do to be saved? O pray for me! &c. And much time I spent in praying with, and counselling of them.

These things continued for some time before I knew that one soul had found rest in CHRIST. But one nig-

as I lay musing on these things, I over-heard two of my children talking together about some crumbs of comfort, (as they called it) they had received. So I got up and went into the room where they were, when one of them (after a small conflict of darkness) broke out in such like words as these: "He is come! He is come! The Comforter is come into my soul! My sighs are turned into songs: Oh! I have him now in the arms of my soul, &c."

The particular places of scripture through which Christ was revealed to her soul, I purposely omit, lest I should be too tedious---She was a maid about twelve or thirteen years of age.---Now I remembered how the children in the Temple sung Hosannas to the son of David. Now my soul was filled with such rejoicing, as I believe none knows, but such as have had travel of soul for poor sinners.

This being the first fruits of GOD's blessing on my labours (or rather the travel of CHRIST's soul) I dedicated it unto the LORD, and so took courage to wait on the LORD, in hopes of a more plentiful harvest, and so it came to pass, for by and by one after another came and declared what GOD had done for the souls, not only of my children, but also of my neighbours.

About this time my eldest son declared the wonders of redeeming love, manifested in his soul. Now there was some things observable in him from a child; it seemed to be his recreation, to get alone with his bible, or some good book. And now the knowledge he had received in the heart, with the head knowledge he had before, being sanctified by the grace of GOD, was all improved in speaking of the mysteries of the kingdom of CHRIST, publicly in our meetings; so that I soon perceived, that he had received the gift of teaching; which was a great comfort to me, he improving his gift one half of the time: Yet always holding a freedom for all the brethren to improve, according to their light; for since the time of our first meeting to this day, we have not forsaken the assembling of ourselves together.

But to be short, the work went on and increased, till eight of my children, and many of my neighbours, manifested their union to CHRIST by faith; and there is now upwards of forty members in our church.

But before we were settled in a church state, we were led to see the institution of baptism, that immersion was the mode, and believers the subjects; and thus we practice.

In the year 1761, my son *Ebenezer Smith* was chosen by the universal vote of the church, and ordained to the pastoral care of the church in this place, and thus continues until this day.

I pass now to give a short hint of the light afflictions I and my brethren have suffered. I call them light because I find, by experience, that that cannot hurt the soul. First, to speak of what I believe the scripture calls cruel mocking; for after I had, for conscience sake, left the church, at *South-Hadley*, and openly professed to make the word of GOD my rule, I was set up as it were for a mark, for every one to shoot at. One would say, I wonder you are not afraid to take the word of GOD in your mouth; another you will undo your family; others that I should go to the ministers. We hire them (say they) on purpose to explain the scriptures to us: And much more of the same nature, so that for a while my case seemed to be almost like PAUL's, when all men forsook him, and no man stood with him; yea I was alone, till I found society as before mentioned, and I have been made the song of the drunkards.

I pass, secondly, to give some account of our sufferings as a society.

A number of us was baptized in June, 1761; we embodied into a church, the July following; our minister was ordained the same year, by the assistance of three neighbouring churches, and with the voice and consent of most of the then inhabitants of the town. The other society ordained their minister, in the year 1763. We endured the injustice of paying his settlement and salary, and for the building of their meet-

ing-house, till the year 1768, then in May, the church sent me with a petition to the General Court at *Boston*, for relief, and they chose a committee to look into the affair, and our petition appeared so reasonable to them, that they blamed me for not coming sooner for help. But finally, the Court passed a resolve, "that I should go and notify the town, and proprietors clerks, with a copy of our petition, to shew cause if any they had, why the prayer should not be granted, at the next session of this Court; and that the further collection of taxes, so far as respected the petitioners, should be suspended in the mean time." But alas! for us, after I was gone to do the business, the Court sent me to do; at the same sitting, the General Court made an act, wherein they impowered our oppressors to gather money of us, or sell our lands for the payment of their minister, and the finishing of their meeting house; yet I went to the Court at the day appointed but could have no hearing.

Then our minister went down to the Court in 1770, but got no help. After this I went to the Court again, and obtained a hearing, and instead of the other society's sending any objections, a number of them sent their names to the Court, that they had no objections against our petitions being granted. The exact number of them I have lost, but this I remember, that when the Speaker read their names in Court, he read till I suppose he was weary, and concluded thus, "and a number more." But the Court gave us no help, but ordered to notify our oppressors to bring their objections.

Thus we sent eight times in all. After this the baptist committee of grievances, put in a petition in our behalf, but got nothing but an order, to notify our oppressors again to bring in objections.

Thus the reader may see how the way was prepared for our adversaries to bring into the Court those awful slanders; representing us not to be worthy of the protection of civil government; which was one cause of our answering for ourselves: For when our opponents un-

derstood how the Court insisted upon having objections, some of those very men that sent their names to the Court that they had no objections, now seemed to be as fierce as the rest against us. And now to appearance we were upon the brink of ruin, for by this time our adversaries had sold at public vendue, about four hundred acres of land, from our society (for a very small part of the value of it) for the payment of their minister and building of their meeting-house. Twenty acres of the best of my land (which was prized at 120 l. lawful money) they sold for the payment of 15s. 8d. and still to aggravate the crime, that 15s. 8d. was not due on my land, but on another man's lot, that I had no concern with, and we told them so before they sold it : And ten acres of our minister's land, and the rest in like manner, Yet after all this, the last time we petitioned the General Court for help, the committee that the Court sent out upon the affair, reported, that they had done us no wrong in selling our land, but quite just and neighbourly.

Thus all hopes of human help seemed to fail ; and the mouths of our enemies were opened wide against us, insulting over us in a most reproachful manner, saying, " when the negroes get free, then the baptists may, &c." But we that had an interest in the throne of grace, ceased not to cry for help, to the supreme orderer and disposer of all things, in whom alone all our hopes remained. Yea, I encouraged myself in GOD, still pleading with him (as between the porch and the altar) to spare his people, and to deal with us according to all his wondrous works, whose mercies are very great over all them that call upon him in truth.

Thus for some time we continued, not knowing what was before us, until our gracious King, with his Council, hearing of our oppression, abolished that law, by which we were oppressed. This, when it came to our ears, was good news from a far country ; then we knew that the heart of the King was in the hand of the LORD. Glory be given to GOD for this deliverance. But to pass on. Lastly, to give some account of my suffer-

ings more particularly, and of GOD's dealings with me under them.

When the news of what the King had done for us was come, our enemies hope of gain was, in some measure, dashed, and they having no other course to take, they filled this part of the country with slanders against me, and our minister in particular, and also against the whole church, villifying and reproaching us; but me they called the Old Devil of all. Yea, so amazingly engaged were they to make my name odious, that I could not go about my lawful calling, but some evil report would be raised from it; and if I kept at home, the very smoke of my chimney could not pass, but be brought as a circumstance of my being about some evil; and if I went abroad where my business called me, my track would be pursued, to see if they could not find some evil thing done by me. But it would fill a large volume to enter into particulars, or to tell all their lies against me: And one of their society, that was a little more considerate than the rest, said he believed that if every lie that was told about me was as big as a bean, they would fill a dwelling room full. But in all their slanders they did not accuse me with any failings, or short-comings in duty, but with things that I was entirely innocent of.

By these things I thought it was keen envy I had to conflict with, and who can stand before it? as the wise man tells us, Proverbs xxvii. 4. "Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous: But who is able to stand before envy?"

Now considering what envy hath done, the cruel efforts it hath made; it appeared to me that my life did hang in doubt, which will more evidently appear by the sequel of the story; but to proceed, not long after we had our help from *England*, I heard that a man in authority at *Hatfield*, threatened to bring me before him, but for what crime I knew not, and one of our oppressors was heard to say, that there was a man or men at *Hatfield* that could prevent what the King had done from doing us any good.

From these, and many such like things, I was in daily expectation of some envious onset, and so it came to pass.

On the 8th of November, 1771, came two officers with their attendants, early in the morning, with a warrant from the Chief Judge of our Court, to seize on my person, and to search my house and shop, for bad money; so they seized on me before I was out of my bed and put me under the hands of one Elijah Wells, (a man who a little before had bought twenty acres of my land, at vendue, for ministerial taxes, and performed many injurious acts, he came in a hostile manner into my field, flung down my fences, tore up a number of my apple trees, and the like; yet he must be my keeper) then they told me they had power to search my house and shop: I told them they might have the liberty of all my keys, and they might search as much as they liked, and desired them not to break any locks, Then I got up and went to my door, and saw many attendants with the officers; then I asked, and obtained leave to pray with my family. After prayer was ended, I was told, that in that time they had broke open my shop: I went out and found the door open, and the lock broke to shivers, and my goods tumbled about as if the hogs had been amongst them. Some of my goods I have missed ever since, My shop door remains with the lock broke ever since; for locks are no defence against such a company, in such authority: Then they went to my house, and every crevice was searched, as if they were nunting a flea, and they were so well pleased with the work, that one of them wished he could have such a chance every day, for some of my goods were seen in their hands, which I have never seen since.

But in the midst of this ransack, there was an uproar made, as if bedlam had broke loose: But in the midst of the confused noise, I heard these words uttered, "we have found it, we have found the very thing." When I came to understand the matter, they had found a lump of brine boiled hard. So some of my fa-

mily told them they might eat it, as they had done the sugar a little before. But when they had tasted, and perceived what it was, that uproar ceased. So they searched, till the officer said he would search no longer, for says he, "nothing appears but that Smith is as "honest a man as ever was." Then they brought me to *Hatfield*, before the Judge that sent them, and ten evidences, in order to prove me guilty of counterfeit-money. (It would be too long here to write particularly how I was used, and abused; I shall therefore only give a sketch thereof.) Then I was called to stand before the Judge, while ten evidences were examined, which took up a long time; and I was very infirm in body, that it seemed as if I should have fainted before he had done; yet I indured it: And when he had gone through, and could get no evidence against me, he checked them for speaking in my favour; yet he would not give out, but committed me to a keeper, though I was more fit to be under a doctor's care, than such a Judge, by reason of my age, and illness of body; yet I was shut up in a cold room, with the doors and windows nailed, and my keeper charged, if he took any sleep to lay across the nailed door. Though my son earnestly intreated that I might lay in a bed, yet no such favour might I receive. So I passed the night composed in mind, waiting to see what GOD would permit those men to do with me further. But in the night I heard a sudden noise, and looking up I saw the nailed door broke open, and my keeper at the door, a going out, I went to the door in order to stop him, but could not, yet he came again before day,

But when the morning was come, I was brought again before the Judge, who seemed (I thought) to be more engaged than ever to get some proof against me, and when he could get none, he seemed to be (as I thought) angry with the evidences: Then he would try to make the very smoke of my shop chimney on sabbath day noons, a circumstance against me; where I made a fire for me and some of my neighbours to warm

by (our meetings being then held at my house) and many other things that seemed as strange as that. For proof of what I have said, here follows a copy of eight of the ten evidences own hand writing (the other two being Armen and his son, who was one of the committee that sold our lands for ministerial taxes, as above said: Although when under oath, they could say nothing against me to prove the complaint, yet now they would not favour me with their hands, as the rest did) which is as follows :

ASHFIELD, November 11, 1771.

WE the subscribers, who have been summoned to prove an indictment against CHILEAB SMITH, of his coining and putting off bad money; do testify and say, that we cannot, nor did not understandingly attest to one tittle of the indictment, nor of any circumstance tending to prove the same: And we never saw nor heard any thing of him, that gave us the least grounds to mistrust that he kept a shop of secrecy, or did any thing there that he was afraid should be known; and do believe that the reports to the contrary are entirely false; neither did we in our judgment, hear any of the said indictment in any measure proved by any of the rest of the evidences, As witness our hands.

Ebenezer Sprague,

Moses Smith, 2d.

Nathaniel Hervey,

Chileab Smith, jun.

Jonathan Sprague,

Nehemiah Sprague.

Nathan Chapins,

Also Leonard Pike (to whom the report was, that I had put off a bad dollar) gave from under his hand, that said report had no truth in it.

Thus when the Judge could find no evidence against me, he spoke of many things, as appeared to me, to darken council, by words without knowledge, as what do you use mercury for? and the like. I pleaded with him to let me answer for myself, which he wholly refused, with such a cant as this, "I know you of old, Smith, you are cunning, &c." yet I ventured to say so much as this, I never used it no other way but to make a doctor's medicine, but was forced to be silent.

Thus he bound me over to the Superiour Court, without any evidence, with a great bond (hoping as I suppose) by that means to put me in prison all winter, for when bondsmen appeared he would not accept them, till he was told that one of them was worth twice as much as the whole bond. So I remained under bonds all winter.

Thus my life was exposed to the rage of cruel men, for I know it was impossible for me to be more innocent of any crime than I was of that which I was apprehended for, and the slanders rang daily in my ears; and the influence that such examples of rulers hath upon common people, who are like minded, is worthy of observation. I shall only mention one instance relative to this affair, viz. I had some dealings with one Simeon Hervey, of *Deerfield*, he complained of injustice; we agreed to leave it to indifferent men to judge between us, and promised to abide by their judgment: They brought in judgment in my favour: But after I was bound over to Court as above said, and the tidings were told in *Gath* and published in the streets of *Askelon* as it were, then this Hervey bestired himself to the purpose, in a very slanderous, outrageous manner, saying, he would make my name ring, at divers times and before divers persons, till he got to that pass, that he threatned to take club law, and then bragged that I was afraid to come to *Deerfield*; for says he, "there are men here that will riddle him till they can see through him as through a riddle:" Thus he continued till he had got so strong that it seems he thought every body would judge as he did (having the Judges example at *Hatfield* before him) so he complained of me to a neighbouring church; who, when they came to judge the affair, so far prevailed in making him sensible of his evils, that he has given me the following confession, to publish it when I think best, viz.

MONTAGUE, January 28, 1772:

THIS may certify all christian people, whom it may concern, that I Simeon Hervey, of *Deerfield*, the subscriber, being at the house of Mr. Jeduthun Sawyers, in

Montague, on the day above written, with a number of men belonging to the Baptist church there, to whom I had complained of Mr. Chileab Smith, of Ashfield, his conduct towards me in an affair of some traps I let the said Smith have for some land at Stafford; wherein I rashly, and in a passion, from time to time, charged the said Smith, unjustly with scandalous defamatory speeches, for which I am heartily sorry and ask his forgiveness, and all other people who heard me: I now believe the said Smith had an honest mind in all his dealings with me for ought appears. As witness my hand,

SIMEON HERVEY.

I also promise to set it up, viz. this paper on the door of my house; to stand one month.

JONATHAN WELLS,
SAMUEL MONTAGUE,

In behalf of the
church.

Thus you may see how my life was in danger, for if the Judge should apprehend me again for some other slander, and put me in prison, I was so infirm, and my disease being increased by the hardship I had met with already, that it was judged by others as well as myself, that it would soon put an end to my life.

But when the time was come, I went to the Superior Court, where I had to wait eight or ten days, for my enemies to try what they could do, and I not permitted to speak for myself. One time by advice of some friends, I went to discourse with the grand jury, when they were not on business; but the officers turned me out in haste.

When the complainer was demanded to bring proof against me if he had any (as I was told) he brought one and another, who said under oath, they believed I was guilty: Well said the jury, but what do you know? Why it is true say they, I know nothing myself, but I have heard a deal of talk about it; but I believe such a man can tell something about it: Then they would go post haste after him; but when he was come, could tell no more about it than the other; thus to be short, they went from place to place, till at last they went about 30 miles after two men, who, when they came, gave in under oath, one that he knew nothing.

about it ; the other, that he should not know the man if he met him in the room. Thus they were obliged to give over : The King's Attorney, who had been very faithful in sending about for evidences, told the jury that he was glad that all suspicions about Smith's making money was groundless. So the Court ordered the cryer to cry me innocent, crying off three times in open Court, and so I was dismissed ; but not one penny allowed me for all my time and abuse.

I suppose through the hardships I endured I lost almost a whole winter's work.

But as touching the crime that has been laid to my charge, I do solemnly protest, that I never have to my knowledge been so much as once tempted in the least to commit the sin, nor to countenance it in any body else, nor so much as knew how they did it that were guilty. And since my enemies have worked their will without any interruption, and I not suffered to speak for myself from first to last, and yet they could find nothing against me ; therefore I think I ought to be believed. Therefore let me intreat you, whoever you are that have had any hand in my sufferings, or have slandered me (or any of us) to turn off your eyes from slanders, and remember in time, that some men's sins go beforehand to judgment ; and that you must give an account for all these things : And if any that stand in place of authority, should read these lines. Let me intreat you as the fathers of our country ; but I am not about to tell you have done wrong, but to pray you to consider of what is done, in the light of GOD's word : And how that all men from the highest to the lowest are prone to make mistakes, in our fallen state, as is abundantly evident from the scriptures of truth ; and compare what I have mentioned in the foregoing lines, done by authority, by which means so much oppression has been brought upon us, viz. That law that was made at the time when I carried a petition to *Boston* for help, as before cited, p. 13 and 14, with the word of GOD, and see if this is ruling in the fear of GOD ; and also the suffering that I have endured in my own person, under this

our authority, without the least provocation, and passed over without the least satisfaction. I pray you to take one serious thought of these things, and see whether you can with pleasure give an account there of another day; for GOD will bring every work into judgment with every secret thing.

But if any should scruple the truth of what I have declared respecting that laws being made, by which we were oppressed, at the same sitting of the Court; and but a few days after they had passed a resolve that they should gather no more money of us till the next sitting. Let them consult the records of the General Court, and they will find it true. And further, when we went to the Court, time after time, eight times in all, and pleaded with them with tears in our eyes, to have compassion on us, and deliver us from the cruel oppressions that we laboured under: They turned a deaf ear to our distressed cries; and as I was informed, made a mock of our tears. The cause of my tears was, because I felt the distress we were in, having been greatly impoverished by the last war; guarding ourselves for some years before we had any soldiers granted us; and now by keen oppression brought so low, that many of my poor brethren's children had to go almost quite barefooted all winter: Mine eyes affected mine heart.

Furthermore, with submission, I query, did our rulers rule in the fear of GOD, when that slanderous paper before-mentioned, p. 8, 14, was brought into the Court before your eyes, without any proof; so far to countenance it as to give no reproof to the slanderers, but suffered it to go to *England*, and our friends there sent back for an answer, it seems, before they would judge upon them, as has been before-mentioned.

But now I desire to give hearty thanks to the General Court, that after the King had disannulled that act by which we were oppressed, that you did then so far consider us: as to discharge us from the whole of the salary of the minister of our oppressors; which act of yours witnesseth, that you are now convinced it was unjust for us to pay it.

But then I query, by the same rule of justice, why we were not allowed something for our damages, which was very great ; our effects made havock of, our apple trees tore up by the roots, and carried off, before our eyes ; and many other things, besides eight journeys, above 100 miles, to the General Court, for help, which cost us 50l. lawful money ? Yet for all this, we have nothing allowed us. Pray consider whether this agrees with your own act.

One thing more we would just mention, and that is, when the General Court had made a donation of a piece of land to the first minister that should be settled in this place : That after the town had settled a minister by the vote and consent of, by far, the major part of the inhabitants, and with the assistance of three neighbouring churches ; and so proved in the General Court, and one of the members of the Court in my hearting, declared that the settlement was good, and none contradicted it ; yet this donation of land was given to a second minister that others settled in the same town, and the first minister and his people rated, and compelled to pay his settlement, and to build a meeting-house for him and his people. Is not this contrary to the words and intent of the charter, which gives equal liberty to all dissenters, whether Presbyterians or Baptists ; and if it is, it ought to be righted.

But perhaps some may inquire whether I have patiently suffered all these things ? I can freely answer yea, because it was for the testimony of JESUS ! And the more I suffer for his sake, so much the more I love him : Because I find his promise made good, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.

And when the officer came and seized on me in my bed, it was no surprize to me, for I had warning by an invisible hand, that I should soon suffer ; therefore I was much in prayer to GOD, that for CHRIST's sake he would be with me, in whatsoever sufferings I should be called to pass through. I was made also to believe that I should have no great matter to do in this trial, but to stand still and see the salvation of GOD. So

when I was taken prisoner and many grievous things laid to my charge, which I knew not. I felt uncommon joy to seize my soul, with thankfulness to GOD for preserving me, from being in the least tainted with the crimes laid to my charge. And when my enemies were trying their utmost to find something whereby they might take hold of me in the law. Then I felt the power of them words on my mind; *Fear not them that kill the body; and after that have no more that they can do; and it is enough for the servant to obey his master.* Many other places also came with such power on my mind, that my love to CHRIST was kindled to such an ardent flame, that if I had a thousand lives, they would not have been all too dear to lay down for his sake: So that I valued not the pains of my body, no more than *Jacob* did the halting upon his thigh when he had obtained the blessing.

But doubtless there are many that will have no understanding in these things just mentioned; for the things of the spirit of GOD are spiritually discerned; the spiritual persons therefore only can read these things with understanding.

Thus I have given a hint as I proposed, of what has fell out in this place, and leave it for the consideration of all; exhorting all that love the welfare of their immortal souls, to take up the cross and follow the lamb, whithersoever he goeth; for I can testify unto you from the word of GOD, and my own experience, that all things shall work together for good to them that love GOD. Therefore awake thou that sleepest! and arise from the dead, that CHRIST may give you light, and he that cometh to me (saith CHRIST) I will in no wise cast out; for *I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.* Rev. i. 18.

F I N I S.

